

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

By this Amendment, claims 40 and 52 are canceled, claims 41 and 53 are amended. Claims 41-48, 53-60 are pending.

Cancellation of and/or amendment to the claims should in no way be construed as an acquiescence to any of the Examiner's rejections. The cancellation and/or amendments to the claims are being made solely to expedite prosecution of the instant application.

A favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Allowable Claims

The Examiner has indicated 43-48 and 55-60 as being Allowable.

Claim Rejections under 35 USC 102/103

Claim 40 stands rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 USC 103(a) as obvious over International Patent WO 96/00576.

Applicant respectfully traverses the foregoing rejection. However, solely in an effort to expedite prosecution of the instant application, Applicant has canceled claim 40. This rejection is moot, and withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Claim 52 stands rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over International Patent WO 96/00576 in combination with Elsberry (U.S. Patent No. 5,846,220) or Xiatao et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,256,347).

Applicant respectfully traverses the foregoing rejection. However, solely in an effort to expedite prosecution of the instant application, Applicant has canceled claim 52. This rejection

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is moot, and withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims Objections

Claims 41, 42, 53, and 54 stand objected to as being dependent on rejected base claims, but the Examiner has indicated that they would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Applicant respectfully traverses the foregoing objection. However, solely in an effort to expedite prosecution of the instant application, Applicant has amended claims 41 and 53 to be independent claims including all of the limitations of the base claim. This rejection is obviated, and withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

For at least the reasons set forth above, it is respectfully submitted that the above-identified application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of the claims are respectfully requested.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further is desirable in order to place the application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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Please charge or credit our
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consideration of this submission.